

# Religions and an Evangelist's Approach to Other Faiths

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## **India**

Motley of religions

Birth soil of major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism

Modern Problems – *Pluralism, Fundamentalism*

Modern Issues – *Religious Conversions*

## **Meaning of Religion**

The word comes from the Latin “religare” and means “to bind”

Religion:

- Binds a community together to some authority
- Binds the adherent to the religious creed
- Binds people to customs, rituals...

Functions as a kind of social adhesive – Religion is the soul of culture

## **Origin of Religions**

### *The Boundaries*

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. (Act 17:25-28)

The Religion of Cain & Abel – *Sacrifice*

Abel's Faith

Cain's Self-Righteous Works

The Religion of Enoch, Noah,... till the Flood

Noah preached righteousness (2Pet.2:5)

Tower of Babel and Division of Humanity (Gen.10)

## **Gospel's Call**

And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. (Act 14:15-17)

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Act 17:29-31)

## **False Elements of Religion**

1. Acts 14:15: *Vanities* – Worthless, Vapor-Like, Not Lasting

2. Rom.1:21-27: *Carnality*

Violation of Law of God – Sinful

Violation of Laws of Nature – Unnatural

Violation of Laws of Logic – Illogical, Foolish

3. Col.2:16-18, 20-23: *False Spirituality* – Spiritual Pride

4. 2Cor.11:13-15: *False Miracles* – Angel of Light Disguise

Demonic Endorsement: 2Thess.2:9;

Deut.13:1-5

Magic, Witchcraft, Signs, Prophecy, Healing

The devil can duplicate everything, but he can't duplicate the blood of Jesus Christ

5. 1Tim.4:1-3: *Demonic Doctrines*

Violation of Law – Idolatry -> Social Evils, Discrimination, etc.

## Good Elements in Religion

**Important:** The approach of condemnation is not biblical. Do not cut the nose and then give a flower to smell.

Right to freedom of conscience is not right to condemn other's faith

## Are there good elements?

1. *Conceptual Links*: Col.2:17 – Foreshadows Christ  
– Divine Revelation in Dreams (Gen.41:38,39), Visions (Dan.5:11,12), Magi (Mat.2:1ff)

– Human Search (Quest – Religiosity)

Acts 17:23 – The Unknown God, Epimenides of Crete

Other prophets: Melchizedek, Balaam (though turned bad)

– Symbols – Examples from Culture – The Wall (The tribal runs behind the wall and is legally secured against any attack); The Blood Covenant of Africa (David Livingstone)

– Concepts – Justice (Acts 28:4), Karma, Salvation, Cleansing by Water, etc

Imp. Certain concepts differ, e.g., “born-again” may be misunderstood as rebirth or *punarjanma* by Hindus

2. *Reduction of Crime in Society*: Gives knowledge of good and evil but is not able to sanctify and save

## **An Evangelist's Approach to People of Other Faiths**

### **Public Witnessing**

Learn about your audience, avoid all sarcastic remarks, preach Christ alone

### **Personal Witnessing**

Be open to the Holy Spirit

1. Ask questions. Questions reveal the mind of the person and also decide an entry point for meaningful discussion.
2. Listen to him/her. Don't be just anxious on pressing your point.
3. Never pass an arrogant and sarcastic remark on his/her tradition.
4. Give your personal testimony of Jesus Christ.
5. Avoid arrogant arguers (1Tim.6:3,4,20). They do

not want to listen. There will be more heat than light.

6. Remember that in many situations evangelism is not a one-point event; it is gradual. Be patient.

7. Unless you know your weapons well, you can't fare well. Know the Scripture. Know what the devil's tactics are. Know people.

8. Very Important: Be aware of the people's culture and never be a stumbling-block to the Gospel.

1Cor.9:20-23; 8:9-13: Same applies to dress code, manners, etc.

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